

# Chairman's Report for 2017



# Chairman's report to members of the Society

**2017 will forever be remembered in Chislehurst as the year in which the Chislehurst Society purchased Chislehurst and St Paul Cray commons.**

For centuries the commons have been in private hands, carrying the risk that decisions made about their use might not be in local residents' best interests. With the Trustees of the Commons responsible for their maintenance and the Society now holding the freehold, and the remaining manorial rights, the commons are protected for this and future generations.

The purchase was not without its moments of drama and was completed just in time to make a dramatic announcement at our road stewards' September meeting, who reacted to the news – and the cake – with enthusiasm.



The total purchase cost for the 180 acres of commons – just over £160,000 – was extremely good value.

A number of people were involved in the transactions, and I would like to mention in particular John Hayhow, Chairman of the Trustees of the Commons, for initiating the opportunity, and bringing it to us for our consideration, and our own Lizzy Howard and Chris Wells for their detailed work in securing the purchase. Clearly we take our ownership responsibilities seriously, and have appointed solicitors and land agents to act for us as freeholders of the commons. We are now reviewing options for the most appropriate long-term holding arrangements for our investment.

Despite the time and effort that our executive committee put into the purchase process (and the need over nine months of ensuring absolute secrecy), the Society still undertook a huge amount of activity across all our charitable objects, which I summarise in this report.

## The Old Chapel

The Old Chapel Hall continues to be hugely popular, well used for a good balance of private and community activities, thus ensuring that we cover our costs, and yet make the Hall available to our members. Three examples of

*Celebration cake with commons decoration. The commons are now protected for this and future generations.*

different usage: the Friday evening cinema events run by Chapel Films are fully subscribed, April's Kitchen hires the Hall to help develop her new business, and our Wednesday coffee mornings are regularly full to capacity – a team of volunteers led by Rosemary Lomas ensures that the coffee mornings run smoothly. Our regular hirers of the Hall have proved most reliable, and we had only one event during the year that caused our neighbours and ourselves serious concern. Our office is also now available for hire by small groups.

Using a bequest from former chairman Reg Parry we were able to install two much needed benches in the car park, and we shared the cost of laying new tarmac on Queens Passage. We also installed a plaque inside the Hall to the memory of Charles Dunn, whose bequest enabled us to purchase the site of the Old Chapel.

Many thanks to Colin Martin and Joanna Friel for overseeing the operation of this important community asset, to Patricia Leach for providing us with such a good service as our Hall Administrator, and to Peter Griffiths for being prepared to help out whenever the need arises.

## Making a real difference to Chislehurst

During the year our grants committee approved seven grants, totalling over £17,000. These included awards for essential repair work at three of our churches, signage and board walks in Scadbury Park and improvements at Chislehurst and Elmstead Woods

Stations. The benefits of some grants take time to materialize; we are pleased that work on the new pavilion in Chislehurst Recreation Ground has started; three years ago we offered to support of up to £20,000 of the cost, and we look forward to its completion later in 2018. Similarly, work to improve the Petts Wood and Hawkwood footpath by the railway line, which we supported two years ago, was finally carried out during 2017.

It is frustrating that we do not receive more grants applications. We have underspent our budget for grants in the last two years, and I urge local groups whose activities meet our charitable objects to consider whether a grant from the Society would help them in their work. During the year Chris Wells and Joanna Friel met representatives from some of the managers of our open land in and around Chislehurst – Petts Wood and Hawkwood, Scadbury, Chislehurst Recreation Ground and Chislehurst Commons – and we have a better idea of the environmental challenges in these important open spaces, where our grants could make a real difference.

## A fair deal for Chislehurst

Alison Stammers chairs the Chislehurst Town Team, which is supported by the Society, and has once again been tireless in her work in improving our High Street and associated streets. Bank branch closures and changes in shopping habits are putting particular stress on the ability of a small shopping centre like Chislehurst to keep its vibrancy. Alison continues to liaise with the agent about the proposed library

development, with Sainsburys over the effective management of its car park, and with a number of landlords to ensure that properties are not left empty unnecessarily. There may be more news on some of these matters by the time of the AGM. Many thanks to Alison for her hard work.

We seemed to have been plagued during 2017 with burst water mains, gas leaks, and other emergency repairs of one sort or another, all of which require our roads to be dug up, often at short notice. The Society has developed a good relationship with officers at LBB who provide us with as much warning as they can of planned and emergency road works. We in turn quickly pass on the messages to members and residents. However delays by some of the utility companies in completing their work has exacerbated traffic congestion in Chislehurst. Once again we are grateful to Alison for taking the time and initiative to develop an effective arrangement with LBB to reduce the delays.

Chislehurst appears to have been somewhat off the radar during 2017 as far as traffic management is concerned after proposals for the A222 came to nothing during the year. We have had little or no reaction from LBB in response to complaints about road safety on

Royal Parade (Coopers School students), Ashfield Lane and Walden Road (both with regard to dangerous levels of speeding). Some measures are being suggested for Green Lane (near Mead Road). Meetings with LBB Traffic officers to examine options to deal with these concerns have now been arranged by Barry Wood. Barry leads our work on traffic and road safety; many thanks to him for the time and effort he has put into this during the year.

We hope that with two new Councillors due to be elected in May, we will be able to develop a good understanding of how we can work together. At the time of writing, we are concerned at some of the implications of a new London Plan, prepared by the Mayor of London, currently being circulated in draft form, and due to be adopted during 2018. Early indications are that LBB will be required to adopt stricter planning measures more suitable for inner cities, with potential impact on such matters as density of housing and parking provision. Barry Redding is aware of the implications, and will be working with Jennifer Dearing, a new member of our executive committee, to identify how we can ensure that Chislehurst is not unduly affected by these new proposals.



*LBB now provide us with information on emergency road works*

# Planning

Professor Barry Redding's planning committee has had an eventful year, reviewing 655 planning applications in respect of proposed developments in Chislehurst (253 of which for trees). The committeesubmitted 103 objections, and 53 observations, figures which indicate how many proposed developments do not meet LBB's planning policies.

These figures hide the level of analysis and time spent in discussions with members on some of the planning applications. Examples during the year included supporting members' concerns over the redevelopment of the Queen Mary House site on Manor Park Road, investigating proposals for a new football pitch at Flamingo Park, which became something of a political hot potato in the year, and responding to applications for development of the riding stables at the north end of Kemnal Road, in an area of Green Belt.

A number of members contacted us to express their concerns at the felling of trees, and loss of footpaths in Kemnal Park, as development continued at the cemetery within the site of the old Kemnal Estate. Barry, Chris Wells and I met with the Park manager and his advisors in an attempt to understand the scope of the development of the Park, and their attitude to protecting the environment in this sensitive, if remote, part of Chislehurst. We were very impressed with the care being taken by Kemnal Park to ensure that they abide by the terms of the planning consents under which they operate, and the thoroughness of their environmental research. We believe that Kemnal Park



*Barry has also been working on the review of the Chislehurst Conservation Area.*

can be trusted in their stated intention to continue to provide access to those who wish to walk through the woods.

Barry has also been working with Joanna Friel and Jennifer Dearing, and a large team of supporters, on the review of the Chislehurst Conservation Area. 2017 was the 50th anniversary of the introduction of Conservation Areas. It was a timely opportunity to refresh the published information on Chislehurst, on which potential developers, and LBB, rely when making recommendations on planning applications here. Much of the work has now been done, and we hope that this important exercise will be completed during 2018.

## Activities for members

The Society's regular talks, now organised by Di Beacom, both at the Methodist Church and at Chislehurst Library, continued to attract large audiences, including one of over 200 for my own talk on the Tiarks family and Kemnal Road! Joanna Friel's heritage groups continue to be active on research projects which



*A plaque at the home of Richmal Crompton, unveiled by the Mayor of Bromley, with members of Crompton's family*

will provide a healthy stream of new publications and articles. Joanna herself continues with her heritage work, with a new series of Friel on Friday about to be launched. Other heritage events during the year included the placing of a plaque commemorating the Chislehurst home of Richmal Crompton (author of *Just William* books and others), the cleaning and repainting of the telephone box on Royal Parade, and the cleaning of the Marsham-Townshend painting that we acquired in 2016. The largest painting, that of Earl Sydney, was too large for our own premises. This has been loaned to Camden Place Golf Club, on condition that Society members will be able to view it in this more comfortable setting.

Our work with schools remains an important part of our strategy. We enjoyed a thrilling Environmental Awards evening at the Methodist Church in May, with music, videos and all sorts of novelties. The subject this year was 'Chislehurst – Rural and Urban', and the Church was full to bursting with parents, teachers and students, who received over £2,000 in prizes. It was Vivien Smith's last year as organiser of the event, and

we are very grateful to her for the hard work she has put into it over the last five years; Vicky Tippin has kindly taken on the task for 2018.

The Schools Forum met twice in 2017, and the cross-school event, *The Mix*, was successfully held this year at Coopers School. More details on our website.

Two particular mentions of thanks: Fr. Paul Farthing allowed us to use the Annunciation Church as part of the Heritage weekend, and John Woods, the manager of Sainsbury's store on the



*Jo Franklin, children's author, and students from Red Hill School who won the Joy Jones Award at this year's Environmental Awards*

High Street helped with the unveiling of a plaque to Emily Garrett, the school teacher who was killed by a V2 in 1944.

Old Chapel Books was launched during 2017 as a means of facilitating publication of new books on local subjects or by local people. We have now published five books under this imprint, which are available to purchase locally and via our website, with four more in the pipeline. Once we have enough titles available, it will be cost effective to market them via well-known internet sites, which we intend to do in 2018.

Chislehurst's community events attract an increasing number of visitors – of critical importance to Chislehurst – and we were pleased to sponsor some of these including The Big Draw, Chislehurst Rotary's Summer Fair, Chislehurst Rocks, and Remembrance Sunday at Chislehurst War Memorial.

## The Environment

Chris Wells leads on environmental matters for the Society, and 2017 saw a significant increase in our activities in this important area.

- #ChisWatch was launched as a means of recording the flora and fauna of Chislehurst;

- A new group, the Friends of Chislehurst Station, is promoting a programme of improvements - including new planting, old photos in the Waiting Room and a lending library - plus monthly litter picks of Station Approach, this work supported by the station's staff and management;

- Meetings were held at Kemnal Park to review plans for further development of the cemetery, including professional management of Ashen Grove, an area

of ancient woodland within the Park;

- Discussions took place with residents and others regarding possible improvements and activities on Belmont Open Space;

- A proposal for a new Bear Trail around Chislehurst was developed by Alison Stammers during the year, and agreement reached in principle for its implementation during 2018;

- We facilitated a first discussion between the managers of Chislehurst green spaces, with a view to these being regular co-ordinating events;

- Chislehurst town litter picks took place six times in 2017, led by Lizzy Howard, and supported by a growing number of volunteers.

Scadbury remains an important focus for the Society, and we support the Friends of Scadbury in their efforts to improve the level of investment, which has been underfunded there over many years. Grants were made in 2017 to the Friends to improve signage in the Park, install a board-walk in the muddiest part of the Acorn Trail, and to test the quality of water in some of the many ponds in the Park.

Many thanks to Chris for leading on this important part of our charitable work.



*Lizzy, with Intrepid litter pickers outside the Old Chapel, wearing their 'I care 4 Chislehurst' t-shirts*

# Running the Society

## Membership

Membership of the Society continues to grow, increasing by 5% in the year to 4,261, in 2,621 households. Many thanks to our 143 road stewards, who create the vital link between the Society and its members, and to Tony McClarty, who, despite his retirement from the executive committee last year, continues to provide membership support to the Society. Pete Miller, who joined the committee towards the end of 2017, has now taken on the role of Membership Secretary.

## Communications

It is essential that we keep up to date with communication trends, and during 2017 Joanna led a review of all our communications. We are now in the middle of a rebranding exercise, with a new improved website imminent. Our main communication is via email, with two-thirds of our members now receiving regular emails from us. Twitter and Facebook followers continue to grow, all of which link in to the huge resources in our well-used website. Many thanks to Joanna, to Mikael Hasler, who led on the work until his retirement, and to Joanne Jones, our administration assistant, who is taking on an increasingly important communications management role for us.

## Legal and administration

We successfully navigated our change to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 31 December 2017, bringing our constitution right up to date, and providing us with the most appropriate structure for our Society. The changes will not affect our relationship with

our members, nor members' rights. Particular thanks to Lizzy Howard for guiding us through this legal maze! Peter Trethewey continues to support us on IT issues – an unseen but vital support - for which many thanks.

## Finance

We are very grateful to the Society's treasurer, Colin Martin, who calmly and efficiently manages the financial side of our increasingly complex operations. In 2017 after incurring additional charges for communications and legal advice we suffered a small loss. However, the stock market rose substantially during 2017, giving us a paper profit of £65,864 on our investments to more than offset this. We are well aware that market investments can fall as well as rise, especially in the current uncertain times.

## People

I am completing this report on the day of the funeral of Tony Turner. Tony was a leading light in the Society for 30 years until his retirement some 12 years ago, and contributed a great deal to the current success of the Society. It is also only a few days since the announcement of the death of Donna Bompas. Our deepest sympathies are with her husband Anthony and their family. It is difficult to put into words the loss we all feel at her cruelly early death, but I am sure that we and other organisations in Chislehurst with whom she worked will find appropriate ways to commemorate her life and the significant contributions she made throughout Chislehurst, not least the ten years when she organised the Environmental Awards for the Society.

There were four retirements from the committee at last year's AGM. I am



pleased that during the year we have recruited two new members onto our executive committee, Pete Miller and Jennifer Dearing, and we are in discussion with two other members interested in joining the committee. This will bring the number of trustees back close to levels needed to oversee the work we undertake. However Lizzy Howard will be retiring from the Committee in April. I would like to thank Lizzy for the tremendous work she has done for the Society, much of it in the area of legal and secretarial, but she has been active across the full range of work we do. We wish Lizzy all the best for the future. We would be very interested to hear from any member who has company secretarial or legal experience who would like to work with, or advise us on these important issues.

As for myself, I was first elected Chair of the Society in 2008, and it has been a tremendously interesting - even exciting - ten years, and a great honour to have led the Society during this time. I believe the Society has prospered, improved its image, and taken some significant steps forward, not least with the purchase and rebuilding of the Old Chapel, and the recent purchase of the commons. It has been a huge privilege to have worked over that time with gifted people - committee members and volunteers - outstanding in their abilities and bound together with their love of Chislehurst; I wonder sometimes if our members appreciate just how hard members of the Committee work on their behalf. Nonetheless, I feel that a change is now right, both for me and for the Society. I have therefore advised the executive committee that I will not be putting my name forward for re-election as chair at the coming AGM. It is said that a Chair

should ensure that they leave the Society in a better position than when they took on the role, and that they should hand the role to someone who will lead it into an even better position. I have no doubt that the committee's chosen successor as Chair of the Society, Joanna Friel, will do just that, and I commend her to you for election at our AGM in April.

**Tony Allen, Chairman February 2018**



# Trustees' report to members

*the Annual General Meeting; one half of the other (longest serving) members retire at the AGM, and are also eligible for re-election.*

The Chislehurst Society CIO, Registered Charity, No 1166276, has its principal address at The Old Chapel, Queens Passage, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 5AP, and is established under a Constitution adopted in April, 2016. During 2017, the activities of the charity were largely carried out in the unincorporated charity, The Chislehurst Society, Registered No. 298413. On 31 December the assets of the latter, and all its charitable activities, were transferred, under deed, to the new CIO, and at that date the trustees and the members of the new CIO were identical with those of the old charity. From 1 January 2018, all transactions will be in the new CIO. This report to members consolidates the activities of the two organisations.

Trustees of both bodies (and members of the executive committees) during 2017 and up to the date of this report were:

Tony Allen (Chairman)  
Joanna Friel (Vice-Chairman)  
Elisabeth Howard (Secretary)  
Colin Martin (Treasurer)  
Tony McClarty (retired April 2017)  
Liz Abels (retired April 2017)  
Christine Barrett (retired April 2017)  
Jennifer Dearing (appointed Nov 2017)  
Susan Matthews (retired April 2017)  
Peter Miller (appointed November 2017)  
Lesley Pullar (retired April 2017)  
Barry Redding  
Alison Stammers  
Chris Wells

*The Officers relinquish their office every year and are eligible for re-election at*

**Do you want to be more involved in local matters, and help make a positive difference to Chislehurst?**

**Contact us to see how you can help!**

## **Objectives and achievements**

The Society's objects are to promote high standards of planning and architecture in Chislehurst, to educate the public in the geography, history, natural history and architecture of Chislehurst, and to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic, environmental or public interest in Chislehurst.

Our planning committee scrutinises all planning applications for Chislehurst; we assist individual members who request our help on planning issues, and we provide information generally to our members.

Our heritage groups undertake research about our past, and their results are communicated to members. We continue our series of regular free meetings for members on a range of local subjects, and started a series of shorter heritage talks at Chislehurst Library. The Society's Environmental Awards for schools and students reached its 27th year, and we supported the annual Big Draw, Chislehurst Rocks and the

Queen's tea party on the Commons. The Old Chapel was available throughout 2016 as the Society's headquarters, community meeting space and rental space, and now provides additional net income for our use in funding our charitable objects.

We continue to support plans and action for improvements across Chislehurst, both the built and open environments. During 2017 we took the opportunity to purchase the freehold and remaining manorial rights of Chislehurst and St Pauls Cray commons at a net cost of just over £16,000. Our environmental work expanded during 2017, and constitutes a significant part of our activity.

We communicate to members in print, online by email, via our website, and using various social media platforms. Individual membership reached almost 4,300 by the end of 2017, in 2,800 households.

### **Financial Review**

The attached consolidated accounts show the results for the year. The value of our investments increased by £65,864 in 2017, as markets continued to rise. Except for this unrealised profit, we suffered a small net loss in terms of our income and expenditure. Our policy on reserves is unchanged: we maintain a level and range of investments in order to generate a regular income to supplement our modest subscription income and rental income, to enable us to acquire suitable assets, or give financial support to local schemes whose activities meet the Society's objectives. Grants to local organisations, were a little over £17,000 in 2017.



This report was approved by the Trustees on 21 March 2018 and signed on their behalf by:

**A. S. Allen, Chairman**  
**C. L. Martin, Treasurer**

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

<b>Income:</b>	2017	2016
General		
Members subscriptions	£10,696	£10,313
Gift Aid tax reclaimed	1,106	1,305
Investment Income	27,188	26,429
Investment revaluation	65,864	72,983
Rental income - Old Chapel Office	10,800	10,800
Rental Income - Old Chapel Hall	20,386	15,419
Miscellaneous income	165	210
Bequests and donations	157	5,767
Charitable Activities		
Promotional sales (net)	721	1,291
	137,083	144,517
<b>Expenditure:</b> General		
Cost of generating funds	1,687	1,188
Administration		
Premises costs	19,143	15,543
Administrative staff	5,510	5,409
Stationery/Telephone etc	3,358	3,108
Legal	4,950	3,379
Depreciation	2,050	1,609
Miscellaneous expenses	2,858	2,842
Communications development	2,775	-
Charitable Activities		
Grants and sponsorship (Note 1)	17,302	24,826
Planning/Environment	988	682
Publications & local study	6,241	5,376
Heritage (incl grant aided projects)	1,298	5,085
Environmental Awards	5,380	4,341
Old Chapel Publishing - net cost	906	-
	74,446	73,387
	£62,637	£71,130
Revenue surplus		

## BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2017

	2017	2,016
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash and short term deposits	47,922	41,468
Investments (Note 2)	700,580	789,716
Old Chapel Building (Note 3)	961,643	1,003,567
Fixtures & fittings etc	16,077	12,580
Less depreciation	(3,659)	(1,609)
Chislehurst Commons (Note 4)	160,226	-
Heritage art (Note 5)	5,898	4,398
Heritage property (Note 6)	-	-
Debtors & prepayments	6,763	835
 <b>Liabilities</b>		
VAT Creditor	(1,682)	(80)
Hall Deposits held	(1,800)	(1,825)
Other Creditors (Note 8)	(28,377)	(48,096)
	<u>£1,863,591</u>	<u>£1,800,954</u>
 <b>Represented by:</b>		
Undesignated		
General fund	1,198,281	1,140,150
Designated Funds		
Grants fund (Note 7)	656,605	646,719
Environmental awards fund	8,705	14,085
	<u>£1,863,591</u>	<u>£1,800,954</u>

The consolidated accounts on pages 12 and 13, and the notes on page 14, having been reviewed by the Independent Examiner, were approved by the Trustees on 21 March 2018, and signed on their behalf by:

A. S. Allen, Chairman  
C. L. Martin, Treasurer

## Notes to the accounts

**Note 1:** Grants approved this year: Farringtons School Forest School project, Improvements to Scadbury, Enhancements to Chislehurst Station, Heritage repairs to Christchurch, War Memorial repairs, St Nicholas Church fence repairs and St Mary's Church fence repairs. In addition smaller donations, sponsorship and affiliation fees totalling approximately £2,970 were paid, or agreed, for Elmstead Woods Station garden, The Big Draw, Chislehurst Rocks and The Mix, and to institutions such as British Legion, CPRE, LBRRF, London Green Belt Council and London Forum. Of grants previously approved, several were found to be no longer required - totalling £3,200.

**Note 2:** Investments are holdings of COIF Investment funds.

**Note 3:** The Old Chapel is valued at cost. The trustees see no requirement for any more formal valuation in the short term, but will review every five years starting in 2021.

**Note 4:** Chislehurst and St Pauls Cray commons, purchased during the year, are valued at cost. An independent valuation prior to purchase confirmed the value at least that of the purchase cost. The trustees see no requirement for any more formal valuation in the short term, but will review every five years starting in 2022.

**Note 5:** Heritage Art covers a number of paintings relating to the Townsend family relevant to the history of Chislehurst. They are valued at cost.

**Note 6:** The freehold of the access drive off Lubbock Road, Chislehurst is being retained indefinitely for environmental reasons to enable enforcement of a single dwelling restrictive covenant on land previously owned by the Society. The trustees place no financial value on it.

**Note 7:** The Grants fund represents money earmarked for future grants for local charitable purposes.

**Note 8:** The creditors figure includes £21,700, being grants approved but not yet paid.



# The Chislehurst Society CIO Notice of Annual General Meeting

**Tuesday 24 April 2018 7.30 pm**

Chislehurst Methodist Church  
Prince Imperial Road, Chislehurst

## Agenda

- 1 *Reception and meet the committee (from 7.00 pm)*
- 2 *Presentation and discussion on traffic and road safety in Chislehurst and Bromley by Angus Culverwell, Head of Traffic and Road Safety LBB (7.30pm)*
- 3 *Annual General Meeting (8.00pm), including:*
- 4 *Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 25 April 2017*
- 5 *Presentation of Trustees Annual Report to members*
- 6 *Re-election of Independent Examiner*
- 7 *Election of officers and executive committee members*
- 8 *Members' questions and open discussion*
- 9 *Close of meeting (9 pm)*

Note: Only members of the Society are entitled to vote or speak at the Annual General Meeting.

The officers of the Society, and approximately one-half of the executive committee, are elected annually. Under the Charities Act 1993, persons elected are required to be acceptable as trustees. Nominations to serve as officers or members of the executive committee should be made in accordance with the Constitution of the Society. It is convenient, but not essential, for nominations to be made on the forms available.

These may be obtained from the Secretary, The Old Chapel, Queens Passage, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 5AP

Tel: 020 8467 0900

email: [membership@chislehurst-society.org.uk](mailto:membership@chislehurst-society.org.uk)

Copies of the documents contained in this report, and the Independent Examiner's Report, are available on our website: [www.chislehurst-society.org.uk](http://www.chislehurst-society.org.uk)

The Chislehurst Society CIO is a Registered Charity, No. 1166276



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